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SUBJECT: INTERNATIONAL TIP EXPERTS DISCUSS BEST PRACTICES
WITH LOCAL NGOS, GOG

REF: A. ATHENS 328

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C O R R E C T I O N - - THIS CABLE REPLACES ATHENS 413

1. (U) SUMMARY: The International Organization for Migration (IOM), the Ministry of Foreign Affairs' Hellenic Aid Division, and Embassy Athens co-organized a January 24 roundtable that brought together local NGOs with international TIP experts who were in Athens for a separate business community roundtable on TIP (Ref A). The NGOs shared their experiences fighting TIP in Greece and the experienced international panel offered both concrete suggestions and warm encouragement. Also on the margins of the international conference, OSCE Special Representative on TIP Helga Konrad held a full slate of TIP meetings with numerous GoG and NGOs reps. The two events were yet another benefit of Athens hosting the international roundtable: "The Business Community Against the Trafficking of Human Beings." END SUMMARY.

Local NGOs Share Challenges

2. (U) IOM, Hellenic Aid, and post took advantage of having anti-TIP experts in Athens for the "End Human Trafficking Now!" conference to hold a domestically focused discussion with Greek NGOs at IOM's Athens HQs. The NGOs candidly discussed the challenges they face, including inadequate resources, lack of protocols with law enforcement in practice, and dealing with Greek society's negative view of TIP victims:

--Nea Zoi, a U.S.-based and funded evangelical NGO that supports and tries to remove people from prostitution, described the difficulties in working with increasing numbers of Nigerian prostitutes under self-described "voodoo curses" and in desperate economic situations.

--KEPAD/Human Rights Defense Center discussed their coordination of the "Ariadne Network" of anti-TIP NGOs (www.ariadnet.net)

--ARSIS/The Association for the Social Support of Youth, which aims to prevent marginalization and socio-economic exclusion of children, told an anecdote of a special prosecutor for children not providing a legal guardian for a potential child TIP victim.

--Social Aid of Hellas, which tries to improve living conditions of "socially-excluded groups" (including TIP victims) through social and material support, distributed an (out-of-date) multi-lingual anti-TIP informational leaflet, an initiative of the Galatsi Group (a gathering of Greek anti-TIP NGOs which meets on an informal basis).

--Also present was Faros Elpidas, a faith-based organization that carries out relief work in Africa.

Experts Offer Constructive Ideas to Move Forward

3. (U) Responding to the NGOs, Melanne Verbeke, Chair of the U.S.-based NGO Vital Voices told NGOs reps to capitalize on the momentum of the international conference where she was a presenter, especially since one third of the Greek cabinet attended. She suggested, "With the government's commitment to working on this issue, it is a great opportunity to show your work and to ask for more collaboration and assistance." Richard Danziger, IOM's head of anti-trafficking programs and also a presenter at the international conference, agreed with NGOs that the Africans are being increasingly trafficked into all of Europe, highlighting that the lack of infrastructure and support for returned victims in many African countries, notably Nigeria, makes prevention and victim reintegration even more difficult. Danziger also mentioned the growing and mysterious trend of unaccompanied Chinese minors who arrive in Europe with cell phones, cash, and no apparent travel plans, then disappear from the authorities' hands. To combat this, one suggestion was to annotate minors' Schengen Visas with the accompanying guardian's information, as is sometimes done with minors' U.S. visas. Wenchi Yu Perkins from Vital Voices shared that the U.S. has similar experiences of

insufficient resources for its anti-TIP NGOs and authorities have difficulty identifying and protecting TIP victims, but she shared details of the immigration relief (T Visa) that is available to TIP victims in the U.S. She discussed the commonalities between protection of victims of domestic violence and TIP, the increasing trend of TIP within marriage (as seen in Greece), and foreign brides tolerating domestic violence for fear of losing their residence permits and/or children.

OSCE Special TIP Rep Explores Greek TIP Scene

14. (U) Also in town for the international conference, OSCE Special TIP Representative Helga Konrad had a separate, full schedule of meetings with members of the GoG's Interministerial Committee on TIP, a number of Greek NGOs, and independent experts such as the Deputy Ombudsman for Human Rights. Prior to her meetings, poloff shared with Konrad Greece's latest anti-TIP progress, including a draft of the Memorandum of Cooperation signed with NGOs (Ref B), details of the new reflection period, and a non-paper summary of the 2005 TIP Action Plan for Greece (Note: The USG "benchmarks." End Note.) Following Konrad's many meetings, her advisor Liliana Sorrentino told poloff that the OSCE delegation found the GoG to be "open to cooperation," and "ready to move forward on a number of issues," such as the implementation of the reflection period and revision of legislation. Sorrentino said OSCE plans to "maintain a close dialogue" with the Greek authorities during this "crucial" first round of work.

15. COMMENT: The opportunity to add international expertise to Greece's TIP program was an unexpected dividend coming out of Ref A conference, but one we -- and Greece -- took advantage of fully. The Greek NGO discussion is another example of improved cooperation between the GoG and NGOs, with the assistance of IOM. While the turnout was a bit limited (only five dedicated NGO reps braved Athens' worst snowstorm in several years), the participants agreed that the ensuing collegial discussion was possibly more productive than a large gathering would have been. Also encouraging was the positive readout of Konrad's range of meetings with Greek officials on TIP.

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